

**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE**In re application of: **Sergio Abrignani**

Serial No.: Not yet assigned

Group Art Unit: Not yet assigned

Filed: **Herewith**

Examiner: Not yet assigned

For: **BINDING PROTEIN****EXPRESS MAIL LABEL NO: EL650 273 428US  
DATE OF DEPOSIT: January 5, 2001***PreComd  
TB  
MW*Assistant Commissioner for Patents  
Washington, D.C. 20231

Dear Sir:

**PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT**

Prior to examination on the merits, please amend the above-identified application as follows.

**In the claims:***Please cancel claims 11 and 12 without prejudice.*

Please insert the following claims:

*Sub ED*  
*B*

N 21. A method for treating a patient infected with hepatitis C virus (HCV) comprising administering to said patient an amount of a protein having a molecular weight of about 24 kd, or a functionally equivalent variant or fragment thereof, and capable of binding to E2 of HCV, effective to reduce the infectivity of the virus.

22. A composition comprising a protein having a molecular weight of about 24 kd, or a functionally equivalent variant or fragment thereof, and capable of binding to E2 of HCV, in